

# Current Status and Recent Management Activities For Nutria in Virginia



Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
August 30, 2012



# Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*)

- Semi-aquatic rodent originally native to South America
- Similar in appearance and intermediate in size to beaver and muskrat



# Introduction History

- First imported into U.S. in 1899
- First record of nutria in Virginia was in 1956



**NUTRIA . . . NEWEST OPPORTUNITY**

New fur-bearing animal now being bred in U.S. Offers huge profits to breeders. This fur is next to Mink NOW in price and will soon surpass it. 15 to 20 young per year. Most easily and economically raised animal known. 1½¢ per day to feed, ANY CLIMATE, disease resistant. The Cabana Marrone strain is obtainable ONLY through Cabana Nutria, Inc. and its authorized dealers and distributors. For free booklet and address of Cabana ranch nearest you write:

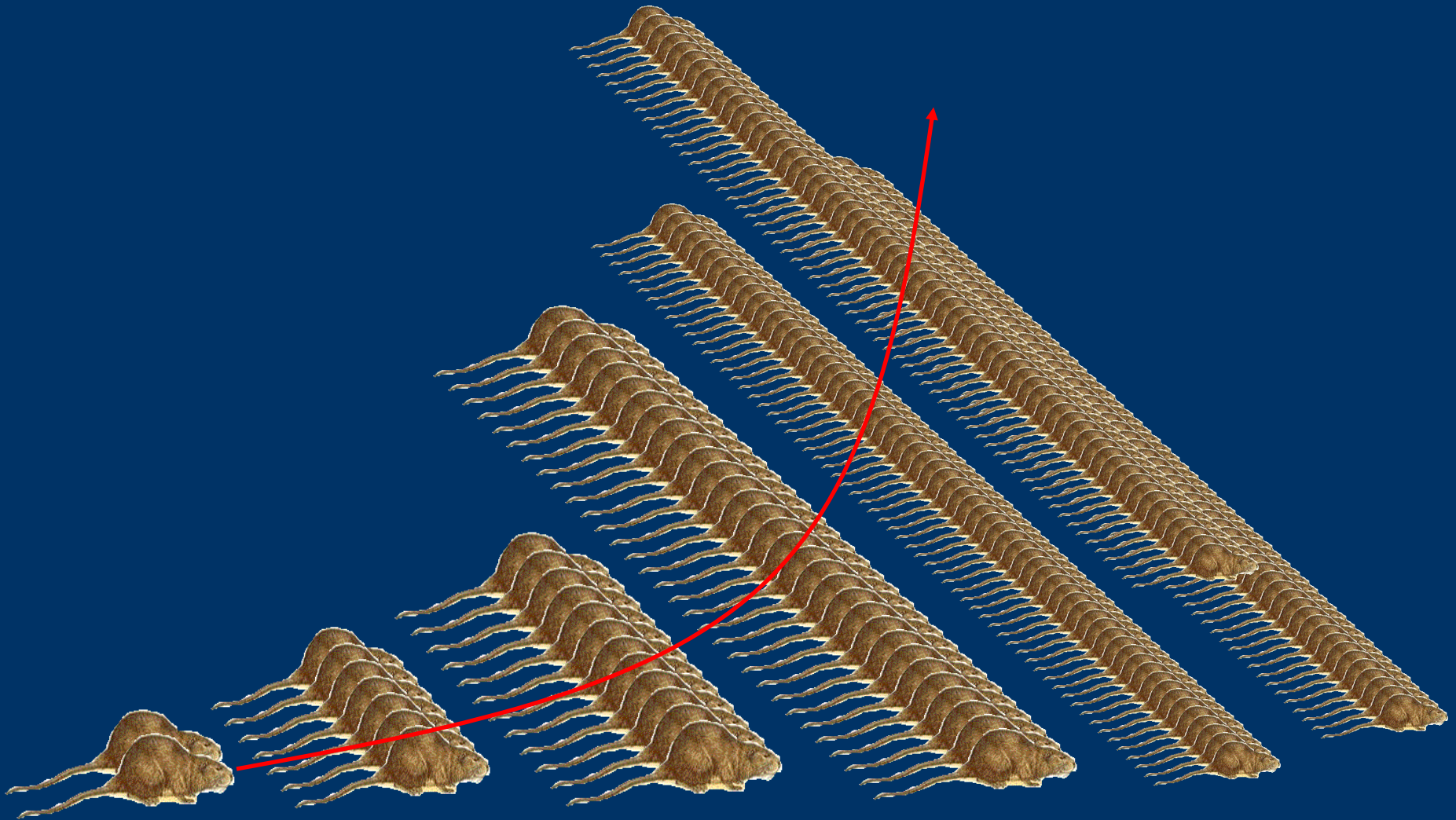
**CABANA NUTRIA, INC. Dept. 27**  
636 West Lemon Avenue, Arcadia, California

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a nutria standing on its hind legs, facing right. To the left of the nutria is a logo for C.N.B.A. (California Nutria Breeders Association) featuring a crown and a nutria head. The text is arranged in a column to the right of the nutria.





# Reproductive Potential



# Marsh Impacts

- Voracious appetite, compete with and displace native muskrats
- Feed on marsh vegetation creating “eat outs”
- Convert wetlands into barren mud flats or open water
- Loss of habitat for other wildlife species, young crabs, fish



# Marsh Impacts



**Blackwater National  
Wildlife Refuge**

**1988  
Aerial Photo**



# Marsh Impacts



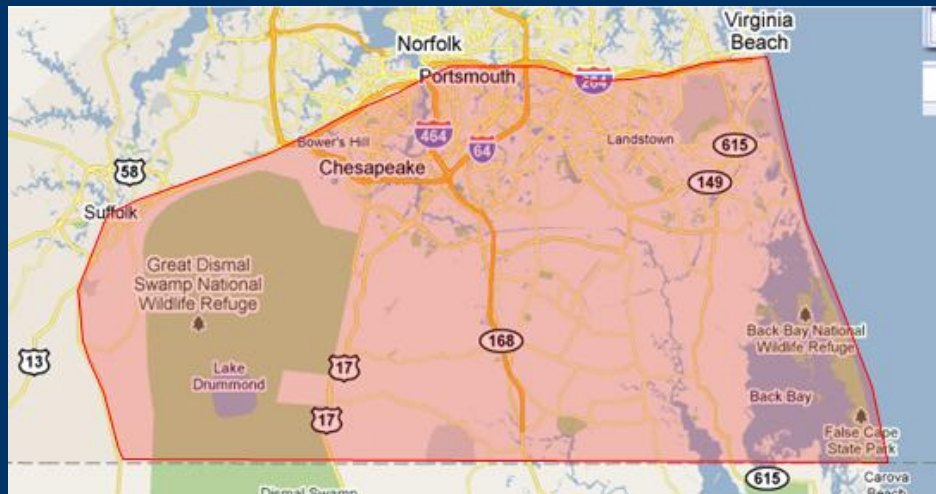
# Other Impacts and Conflicts





# Status in Virginia

- Until recently, no coordinated nutria population monitoring efforts
- Populations were believed to be limited to southeast corner of state with occasional reports on Delmarva Peninsula



# Increased Interest: Why Now?

- Nutria appear to be increasing and distribution expanding
- Increased recognition of nutria threat to Virginia wetlands
- Success of Chesapeake Bay Nutria Eradication Project
- Potential federal funding for nutria eradication in Virginia



# MAPAIS Project





# MAPAIS Project Objectives

- To design and implement a **standard inter-agency reporting process** for nutria in Virginia
- To establish the **current distribution** of nutria in Virginia and publish report
- To establish a **multi-agency panel** to guide development of a nutria eradication plan



# Documenting Current Distribution

## *Report a Nutria in Virginia*

[CMI Home  
Page](#)[Report a  
Nutria](#)[About the  
Project](#)[Identification  
of Nutria](#)[Species  
Information](#)[Human/Wildlife  
Conflicts](#)

### Report a Nutria in Virginia

Please provide any information regarding sightings of nutria in Virginia or the surrounding states. The collection of this information is important to actively manage this species. In no way will CMI or the partner agencies share or sell the information provided below. We thank you for your time in assisting in the management of this invasive species. NOTE: Required fields are in red.

#### **Required Fields:**

Date of Sighting (M/D/YY):  State:  City:

Nearest Address/Intersection:  Zip:

Number of Nutria Seen:

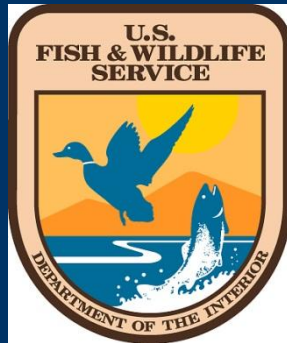
#### **Optional Fields:**

First Name:  Last Name:

Contact Email (for follow-up):

# 2 Day Nutria Workshop (March 2012)

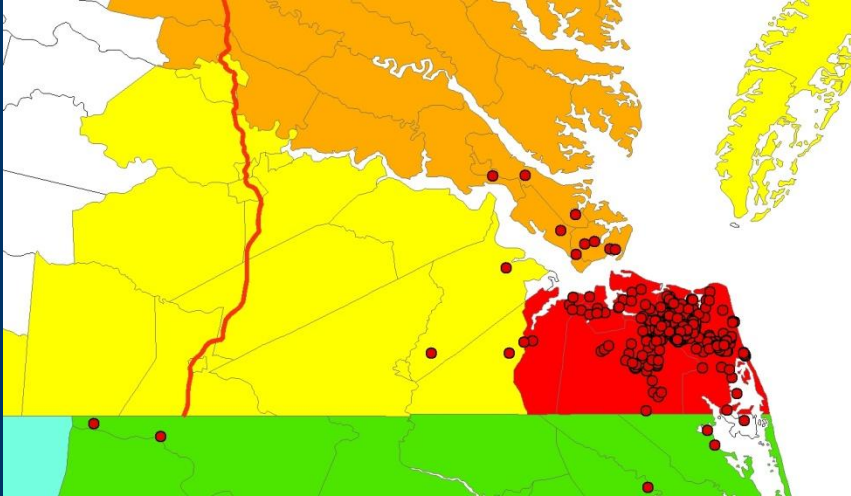
- 19 participants representing 10 federal, state, and non-governmental agencies and organizations



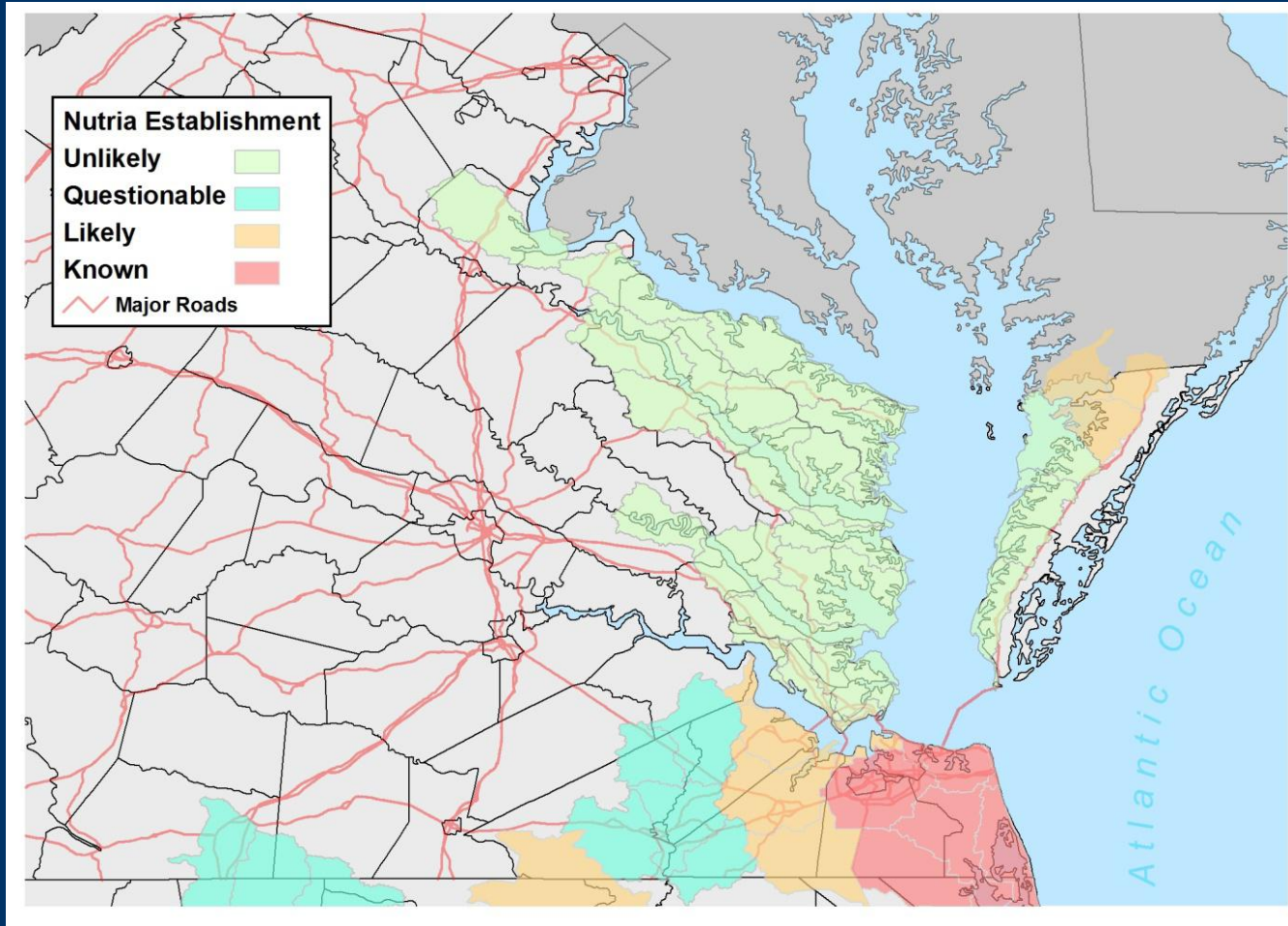


# Goals of Workshop

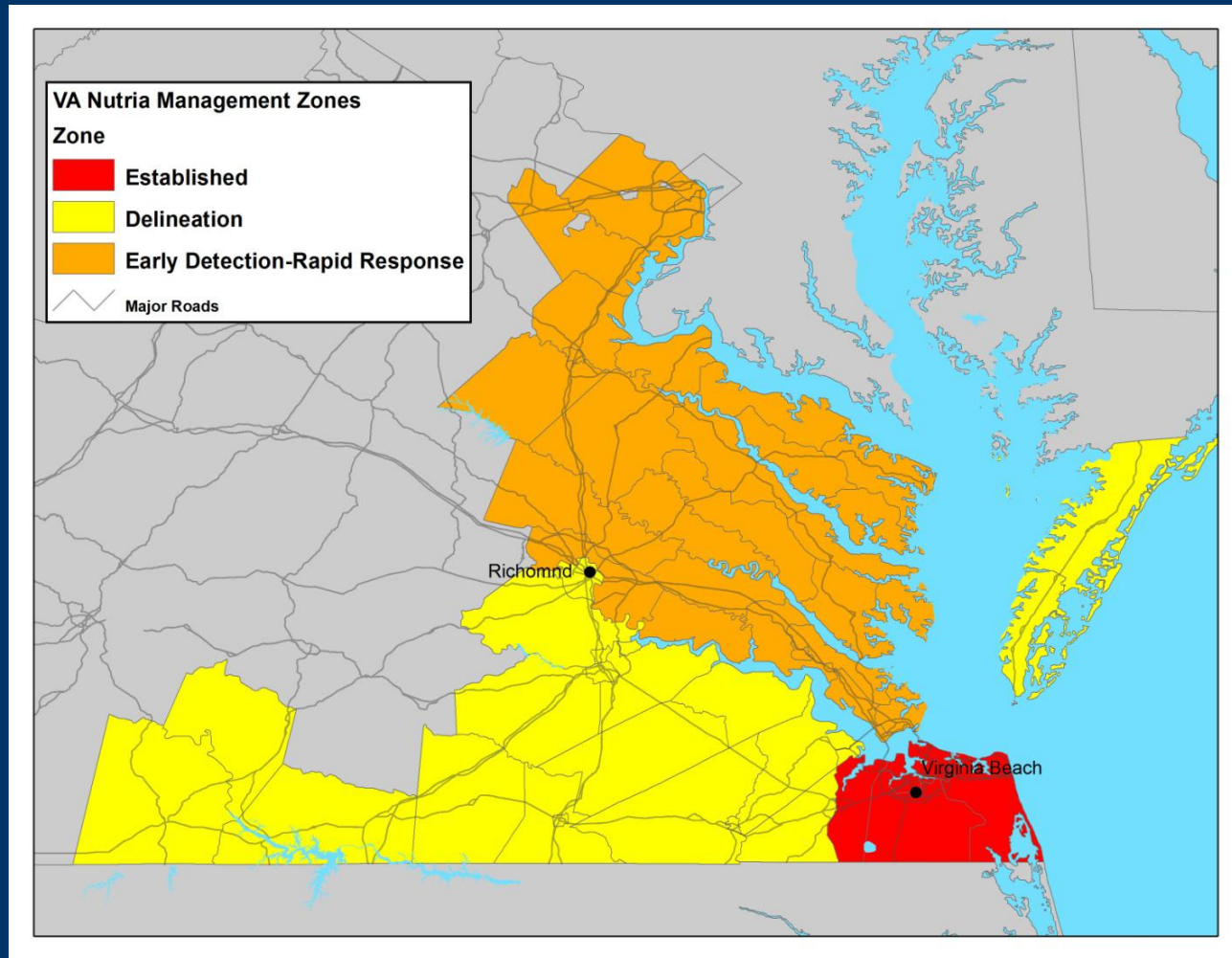
- Build current nutria distribution map
- Discuss CBNEP plan and see how it applies to Virginia
- Monitoring and management actions needed
- Discuss function/structure of Nutria Steering Committee



# Contemporary Nutria Distribution



# Nutria Management Zones





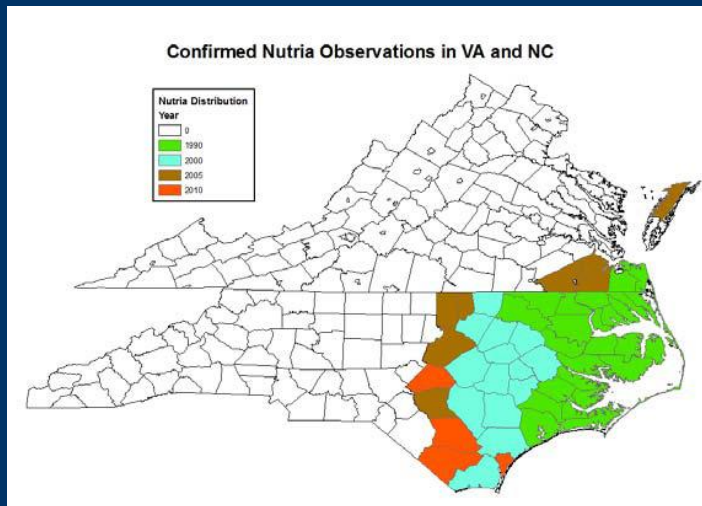
# Steering Committee

- 7 representatives from DGIF, NCWRC, USDA-WS, USFWS
- Coordinate detection and response actions/procedures
- Maintain databases and records of nutria sightings
- Prioritize future collaborative efforts



# Ongoing and Future Needs

- Develop strategic plan for eradicating nutria in VA and NC
- Evaluate new techniques for detection/monitoring of nutria
- Research effectiveness of control techniques in urban landscapes (i.e. Virginia Beach)
- Additional information on current distribution of nutria in NC



# QUESTIONS ?